

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Foster Corporation

Connecticut State Technology Extension Program

Foster Corporation Achieves Iso 9001:2000 Certification

Client Profile:

Foster Corporation, established in 1989, produces specialty thermoplastic compounds, most of which are used in implantable medical devices. Foster Corporation employs just over 30 people at its world headquarters in Dayville, Connecticut, which also houses the company's research and development arm, called Applied Polymer Development.

Situation:

Foster Corporation first registered to the ISO 9000 standard in 1996. As standards have changed over the last decade, the company decided to upgrade to the most recent standard, ISO 9001:2000. In 2001, Foster was working with the Connecticut State Technology Extension Program (CONNSTEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, on Leinfo (Lean Information Flow). When Foster was ready to begin its ISO conversion, the company asked CONNSTEP to assist in this initiative as well.

Solution:

CONNSTEP facilitated internal audit training and coached Foster Corporation through the conversion to ISO 9001:2000. With CONNSTEP's help, the company produced control documentation, new work procedures, and processes, using templates which made reformatting, renaming, and renumbering the documents less time-consuming. The upgrades also made these process documents easier for employees to use and understand.

Foster additionally made the documents accessible by computer, replacing a manual system, which allows quick access to the documents and ensures that employees use the most up-to-date version. Foster's employees were very receptive to changes in the quality system and promptly learned the new way of accessing documents. After a rigorous third-party audit, Foster received its ISO 9001:2000 upgrade.

Results:

Achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification.
Improved product quality.
Improved customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

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“[My advice to companies seeking ISO certification is] Start now. Seek the advice of a registrar or organization like the Connecticut State Technology Extension Partnership. Spend the money. Take the time. It is worth it.”

Karen Andrews, Quality Systems Representative